

May 20, 2016

Chief Gordon Eden
Police Department

via Interoffice Mail

Chief Eden,

During our most recent City Council meeting, I had the chance to speak with Deputy Chief Garcia about the police department's buy-bust program in District 6.

Since first reading of this program a few weeks ago, I obtained copies of several criminal complaints outlining reversal operations at or near Central Avenue and Pennsylvania Ave in District 6. None appear to have resulted in any arrest of significance or criminal intelligence that had any long-term community impact.

While I appreciate your department's attention to the high levels of criminal activity near that intersection, I believe the process undertaken in this operation is misguided and targets the symptom of a larger problem without bringing any long-term benefit to the community.

I am requesting that you immediately suspend the low-level "buy bust" program.

In my own experience, validated through conversations with officers working this area and by prosecutors in our own judicial district, a much more effective and comprehensive approach is realized by removing the dealers who come to this area from elsewhere to set up networks to trade firearms, narcotics, large sums of money and stolen property.

In short, removing the seller closes the market and removes the incentive for unsavory characters to loiter day after day waiting on opportunities for a quick score.

A community free of that criminal stranglehold is also more welcoming to service organizations who can address the underlying healthcare and social service needs of those currently coping through addiction.

In contrast to these operations, since being elected to this Council last year, I have reviewed dozens of criminal complaints and police reports outlining outstanding work by narcotics officers engaging in community-changing behavior.

Earlier this year I delivered to you a letter of commendation for officers who responded to neighborhood concerns about a drug house near a middle school.

They developed a long-term investigative plan, conducted numerous interventions to seize drugs from buyers and sellers in order to build a case, and finally executed a search warrant where they seized weapons, stolen property and narcotics. A similar result occurred at a home not far from another middle school in District 6 a few months later.

These targeted operations are sending the right message and providing a model for community-police partnerships that put our best trained investigators to work to solve our most pressing community problems. I appreciate D.C. Garcia expressing a willingness to reevaluate the program.

Please provide my office with an update on this process and how I may be helpful in building community partnerships that bring long-term change to this neighborhood.

Thank you,

*Pat Davis
City Councilor, District 6*

*cc: Mayor RJ Berry
Deputy Chief Eric Garcia*